



DISASTER RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Under the coordination of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the *State Emergency Plan*, the Department of Health Services is charged with the responsibility for coordinating statewide disaster public health assistance in support of local operations. The Department has primary responsibility for public and environmental health operations and has a major supporting responsibility to the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) for disasters involving mass casualties.

Authorities and References

- **Executive Order**
- **Administrative Order**
- **Memorandum of Understanding**

The Department of Health Services' (DHS) responsibility to prepare for and respond to emergencies is found in Governor's Executive Order W-9-91. The Executive Order mandates emergency preparedness and response assignments for all state agencies and departments under the coordination of OES.

An Administrative Order details the emergency preparedness and response functions of the Department. The Administrative Order guides OES and the Department in coordinating priority tasks and programs related to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery in accordance with the OES *State Emergency Plan*.

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between the Department and the Emergency Medical Services Authority. This agreement details the relationship between DHS and EMSA in planning for and responding to a catastrophic disaster and describes the specific responsibilities of each department.

JEOC

The primary responsibility of DHS under this agreement is the development, implementation, and administration of the Joint Emergency Operations Center (JEOC). In a major disaster, the JEOC acquires medical and public health supplies, equipment, and personnel as needed to support the disaster medical response under the statewide medical/health mutual aid system. The JEOC also serves as the central point for coordination of the Department's emergency response and recovery activities, information, and resources.

DHS Responsibilities

The DHS emergency responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

- To preserve, protect, and restore the health of the citizens in the disaster area through the provision, support, or restoration of public health and medical care services and programs.
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Specific Responsibilities

Following are some of the specific disaster responsibilities of the Department:

Prevention Services

- Ensure the safety of food, drugs, medical devices, bottled water, and other such products in the disaster area.
- Ensure the safety of public water supplies. In coordination with other state and local agencies advise the public on the safety of the drinking water supply.
- Provide public health laboratory services to assist state and local agencies as requested.
- Provide surveillance, prevention, and control of infectious diseases.
- Assist state and local agencies as requested in the assessment of risk to responders and the public from hazardous material incidents.
- Provide technical advice and assistance to local vector control agencies as needed to assure the control of disease-transmitting insects and animals, including flies, mosquitoes, and rodents.
- Assess radiation hazards to prevent injury and minimize radiation exposure of the public and emergency workers.
- Establish measures to mitigate public health damage from radiation, including creating safety criteria for reoccupying and rehabilitating contaminated areas.
- Serve as the lead technical agency in the ingestion pathway, recovery, and reentry phases of a nuclear power plant emergency.
- In coordination with federal, state, and local agencies and other researchers, conduct epidemiologic investigations as appropriate to assess the impact of the emergency on the public health.

Laboratory Services

- Ensure that reliable clinical and public health laboratory services and blood bank services and products are available.

Licensing and Certification

- Inspect health facilities to determine their ability to provide patient care. Monitor the relocation or evacuation of patients from damaged facilities.
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Health Information and Strategic Planning

- Provide emergency supplies of "death certificates" and "permit for disposition of human remains" forms and training in their use.
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Medical Care Services

- Ensure that Medi-Cal beneficiaries enrolled in managed care plans have access to necessary medical care in the event of a disaster.
 - If necessary and feasible, provide interim Medi-Cal payments to providers in the disaster area or responding to the disaster.
 - When appropriate, modify or waive certain Medi-Cal eligibility requirements that would not result in any conflict with federal rules or state statute.
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Primary Care and Family Health

- Provide coordination and assistance for DHS-funded primary care clinics impacted by the disaster.
 - Provide coordination and assistance to local WIC agencies and vendors in the disaster area.
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All DHS Programs

- Provide personnel on request to assist the Department of Social Services at the Disaster Application Centers or to assist the Office of Emergency Services or other state or local agencies as appropriate.
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If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance regarding this listing or the Department's emergency planning efforts, please call.

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